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ODYSSEUS' FEAT OF ARCHERY.

Editor of American Journal of Archæology.

Sir:—In the last number of your journal (vol. VI, p. 359), an allusion is made to the explanation offered by Berger (*Berl. phil. Wochenschrift*, p. 714), in regard to the possibility of Odysseus' feat of archery, based upon the discovery in the tomb at Vaphio of a bronze axe-head, having its blade pierced with two openings. This is figured in the *Ἐφημερίς Ἀρχαιολογική*, 1889, pl. 8, from which it is copied into *L'Anthropologie*, vol. I, p. 554. In form it is quite similar to the Egyptian battle-axes, described and figured by Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, vol. I, p. 362, pl. 319, figs. 1–6. There is no physical impossibility for an arrow to be shot through twelve such axe-heads, ranged in a row. In fact, this is the explanation offered by Bothe, in his note to *Odys.* XIX, 572, based upon a conjecture of Count Caylus, from whose *Tableaux tirés d'Homere et de Virgile* is copied a figure of an axe-head pierced with a hole, representing his idea of what was the *πέλεκυς* of Homer.

But to this explanation, as well as to that of Berger, your remark is applicable, that "the main difficulty is in the fact that the Homeric text, of [*Odys.*, XXI] 422, seems to indicate a hole, not in the blade, but in the handle." I do not so understand the passage referred to, but think that *στελεῖ* there means the *hole* into which the *στελαιόν*, the *helve* of the axe, is inserted; as in the description of the one which Kalypso gave to Odysseus (*Odys.*, v. 236): "a great axe of bronze, sharp on both sides, and in it a beautiful helve, made of olive-wood, well fitted." Two axe-heads of this shape were discovered by Schliemann at Mykenai, which are figured on p. 111 of his work; four were found at Hissarlik (*Ilios*, p. 606), and one at Tiryns (p. 168). I think it was through the helve-holes of twelve axes of this form, ranged in a line, that Odysseus shot his shaft; and this is also the opinion of Dr. John Evans, who has in his collection three such axes, found in Greece (*Ancient Bronze Implements of Great Britain*, p. 161).

HENRY W. HAYNES.

Boston, Jan. 1, 1891.